



**Verbal testimony submitted to the Education Committee on S.B. 948, An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut**

March 3, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Willie Medina and I am Minister at Iglesia Bautista El Calvario de Bridgeport.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to speak in favor of SB 948, An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equality.

For decades we have been underfunded in the city of Bridgeport.

Being an ELL student in the Bridgeport school system back in the 80s was hard enough, but seeing many of my classmates leave school and others slip through the cracks and wind up in prison, in the streets, or in graves was even harder. I went to the military because it seemed I had no other options.

You would think 30 years would be enough time to fix this, but our current schools are those where teachers are offering extra credit points on tests and assignments if students bring in a pack of paper. Now, with this pandemic our children are falling even more behind. We need to be better equipped to make sure that our kids are successful.

We want to be made whole. We want what is just! When I think about what has been missing, and what our money can do now it breaks my heart as a father.

Just remember, if someone is found at fault for something they have done wrong, they have to pay restitution. The state is at fault, they have wronged us for decades and restitution must be paid.

According to your current law, students in high school like my daughter, Amaryllis, will never see their full funding. This is why I ask that you take one hard look in the mirror and ask "am I doing enough?"

Our kids are faced with enough tragedies, show them that change can happen! Please pass SB 948.

God bless you all,

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